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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate females were classified either as traditional or nontraditional in their views of appropriate occupations for women, based upon scores on Spence and Helmreich's Attitudes Toward Women Scale. Each group was then administered an occupationally stereotyped or a non-stereotyped version of Horner's Item Test (describing Anne who is a nurse or student, or who is a doctor, respectively). Good and Good's questionnaire was also administered. Results indicated that the traditionally oriented women reacted more negatively to success in occupations which are considered socially inappropriate. Traditional women also reacted less negatively to success in traditionally female occupations. Nontraditionally oriented women, however, reacted significantly less negatively to success in either stereotyped or nonstereotyped situations. Analysis of variance revealed a significant group (traditional/nontraditional)-by-occupation (stereotypic/nonstereotypic) interaction. The Item Test was found to be correlated with Good and Good's questionnaire. (The results are discussed in terms of the slowness of changes in social attitudes, and implications for research on fear of success and on long-term motivation). (GDC)

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Fear of success? - The effects of socialization orientation

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Running head: Fear of success?

Abstract

Questions were raised concerning the viability of Horner's motive to avoid success as a motive in the traditional sense. Research was presented to support alternative views. An experiment was performed in which women were classified as either traditional or nontraditional according to their scores on the Attitudes towards Women Scale. Each group of women was then subdivided and administered a non-occupationally stereotypic Stem Test or an occupationally stereotypic Stem Test. Results show that nontraditional/nonstereotypic group manifested significantly higher negative to success than any other group. Implications were discussed as they related to the fear of success construct.

Fear of Success? - The Effects of Socialization Orientation

Since the presentation of her theory that women have a motive to avoid success, Horner's (1968) theoretical ideas have generated much research, but that research has not yet clearly demonstrated that the motive to avoid success or fear of success is a motive within the tradition of motivation research (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark & Lowell, 1953) she purports to extend.

In her paradigmatic study which used a thematic completion method in which both women and men wrote stories to cue sentences, Horner found that 65% of the women she tested but only 10% of the men told stories containing negative reactions to success. Horner concluded that these negative reactions indicated a motive to avoid success and that greater numbers of women than men would exhibit the motive. Subsequent studies showed a lower proportion of women (50%) and a higher proportion of men (35%) manifesting negative reactions to success as compared to Horner's initial study (Solomon, 1975; Horner, 1972); a higher proportion of men than women with such reactions (Hoffman, 1974; Alper, 1973; Morgan & Mausner, 1973) or equally distributed proportions (Moore, Note 1; Tressemer,

1973).

Before assuming that Horner's interpretations of the negative reactions represent a motive to avoid success, that the motive is characteristic of men as well as women and that large numbers of both sexes are motivated to avoid success, careful consideration must be made of alternative explanations. It is possible that instead of men and women projecting their ow motives upon the cue sentences, they are simply responding to a stereotyped cultural belief, held by both sexes that women will suffer for their successes. This view dictates that a woman, regardless of her intelligence, education or ability, should assume the traditional primary roles of wife and mother. By assuming this role the carrer oriented woman forfeits the possibility of direct personal rewards associated with achievement and also avoids the negative social consequences of violating cultural stereotypes. The career woman, on the other hand, is in a position to attain the positive rewards of achievement but must deal with the negative consequences of violating cultural stereotypes.

Monahan, Kuhn and Shaver (1974) as well as other investigators (Solomon, 1975; Feather & Raphelson, 1974; Moore, Note 1; Spence, 1974) have found evidence for the cultural

stereotype explanation of the negative reactions which suggests that the stereotype explanation is more powerful than the motive explanation. A critical factor in the stereotype explanation is that women expect negative social sanctions to follow success in any endeavor other than the traditional primary roles. If the perception of negative sanctions following success were low, then, presumably the negative reactions to success would also be low. Alper (1974) dealt with this issue by performing a variation of Horner's (1968) orginal study. In addition to asking female students to write stories about "Anne" in medical school, she asked them to write stories about "Anne" in nursing school. If the cultural stereotype explanation is valid the women should anticipate some negative consequences no matter the occupation. However, the experimental results revealed that women under the nursing school cue manifested significantly less negative reactions than they did under the medical school cue. Cherry and Deaux (Note 2) and Stiver (1976) also found that female subjects anticipate negative consequences for occupational behavior as a direct function of its violation of traditional cultural stereotypes. Thus, the more broadly based cultural stereotype explanation must be modified by including the notion of

female appropriate/inappropriate occupational behavior.

It follows, then, that women who accept the cultural stereotype of occupational behavior (traditional) should be more prone to anticipate negative social consequences for succeeding in female inappropriate careers than women who do not accept the stereotype (nontraditionals).

Method

Subjects. Subjects were drawn from 200 women enrolled in upper division psychology courses. All volunteers were administered the short form of the Attitudes towards Women Scale (AWS) (Spence & Helmreich, 1972). Women scoring in the upper quantile, or nontraditional end of the distribution (N = 50) and the lower quantile, or traditional end (N = 50) were utilized in the remainder of the study. Women in each group were randomly chosen to form two subgroups of 25 women each.

Procedure. One traditional and one nontraditional group was administered the Horner Stem Test (Horner, 1968) in the usual fashion. The remaining two groups were administered a modified Stem Test (Anne in nursing school and Norma as a teacher of home economics). The former administration represents the out-of-stereotype occupations. Each group was also given the Good and Good Questionnaire (1973). The two

instruments were given in a counterbalanced order so as to control for position effects.

Tests. The AWS was objectively scored according to Spence and Helmreich (1972) except that a constant of 1 was added to each possible response to facilitate scoring. Thus, the possible range of scores was from 25 to 100 instead of 0 to 75. The Good and Good Questionnaire was objectively scored following the method of Good and Good. Horner's Stem Test was scored using a variation of Horner's (1968) technique. Instead of scoring for the presence of absence of negative reactions, variation in the potency of the reactions were noted. Thus scores of 0, 1, or 2 were possible. This modification was necessary in order to be able to correlate the Stem Test scores with those of the Good and Good questionnaire. Two independent raters were used to score the Stem Test and their interrater reliability was computed to be 0.95 ($p < .01$).

Results

The AWS scores ranged from 47 to 100 with the nontraditional group ranging from 94 to 100 ($\bar{X} = 96.1$, s.d = 1.9) and the traditional group from 47 to 76 ($\bar{X} = 68.2$, s.d. = 7.9). The nontraditional group consisted of women who were slightly but nonsignificantly older ($\bar{X} = 25.6$ years) than the tradi-

tional woman ($\bar{X}$ = 22.8 years).

As a partial check on the validity of the differences between the two groups, several measures of social role expectations were obtained. Traditional women expressed a significantly greater expectancy for marriage (χ^2 = 6.90, $p < .01$) and children (χ^2 = 11.48, $p < .01$). The traditional women were significantly more likely to choose traditional career (Hoffman, 1974) than nontraditional ones (χ^2 = 7.64, $p < .01$). In contrast to social goal data, there were no differences between the groups on parental income, proportion of working mothers or proportion of mothers or fathers with college degrees.

The main hypothesis of the study was confirmed. Traditionally-oriented women did react significantly more negatively to success in culturally defined "inappropriate" occupations and significantly less negatively to culturally define appropriate occupations, while nontraditionally oriented women reacted significantly less negatively to success in either stereotypic or nonstereotypic occupations. An analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant group (traditional/nontraditional) by occupation (stereotypic/nonstereotypic) interaction ($F = 4.52$, d.f. = 1/96, $p < .05$) and a significant main effect ($F = 4.25$, d.f. = 1/96, $p < .05$).

A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Cell means were correctly ordered and individual comparisons revealed that the traditional women's Stem scores for the nonstereotypic occupations (e.g., medical school and physics) were significantly different ($p < .05$) from all other cell means. There were no other mean cell differences found. The profiles of cell means in the group X occupation summary table are plotted in Figure 1.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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Analysis of the Good and Good Questionnaire revealed that the nontraditional women scored significantly lower ($t = 2.08$, $p < .05$) than the traditional women. This results parallels in general the results of the Stem Test analysis. In order to assess the strength of the relationship between the Stem Test and the Questionnaire correlational analyses were made. After a logarithmic transformation of the test score data, the two tests were found to be significantly correlated ($r = .48$, $p < .01$). A correlation using the traditional group's scores was also significant

(r = .57, $p < .01$), however, when only the scores from the nontraditional group were use, the correlation was smaller (r = .23, n.s.), but the trend remains.

Discussion

The major hypothesis of the study was confirmed. Traditionally-oriented women in the nonstereotypic occupation condition manifested significantly more negative reactions to success than women in any other group/occupation condition. All other conditions were significantly lower. These findings are especially suprising when take within the context of the generally raised scores on the AWS for the traditional women. From the AWS results it appears that the nontraditional women strongly reject the traditional notions of socialization and the traditional women, although they do not subscribe to nontraditional values, nevertheless, do not reject them completely. Two possibilities suggest themselves. Although traditional women report themselves to be less traditional on the AWS, the area of nontraditional occupation still remains relatively free from changing social views. Or, traditional women are not as liberal as they perceive themselves and continue to hold traditional views. For as Sarason (1973) has pointed out ingrained social attitudes do not change in the short run, it takes decades for them

to be modified. If the former is the case, then the motive to avoid success literature is and will remain in a constant state of flux as social views on female "appropriate" behavior changes rapidly. In this case, the negative reactions of the traditional/nonstereotypic group probably reflects a social anxiety which will gradually decrease as stereotype for females decrease. One would suspect that within the relatively near future results as found in the present study would not be replicable. If the latter is the case, and traditional women are not as nontraditionally-oriented as they perceive themselves, then investigators will have to perform longitudinal studies of occupational behavior to show that the motive to avoid success is a motive and is an enduring one.

In any event, this study has shown a complex relationship among ability level, traditional/nontraditional orientation and perceived appropriateness of occupational choice. The socialization orientation held by women is an important factor which should be taken into account when attempting to predict success in occupational endeavors.

The Good and Good Questionnaire and the Stem Test did reveal parallel results and were significantly correlated for both groups and for the traditional group. The instru-

ments were not significantly correlated for the nontraditional group. A possible explanation for the latter finding is test artifact. By expanding the range of "fear of success" scores on the Stem Test to make correlational analysis possible, the distribution of scores was expanded on one side only (the "fear of success" side), with the other end of the distribution left as zero. Since no negative or approach to success score were possible, the correlations between the nontraditional women's was lowered by the introduction of higher percentages of error variance.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Horner's Stem Test Scores

Source	df	MS	F
Groups (traditional/ nontraditional)	1	20.48	4.25*
Occupation (stereotypic/ nonstereotypic)	1	9.83	2.04
Groups X occupation	1	21.79	4.52*
error	96		

* $p < .05$

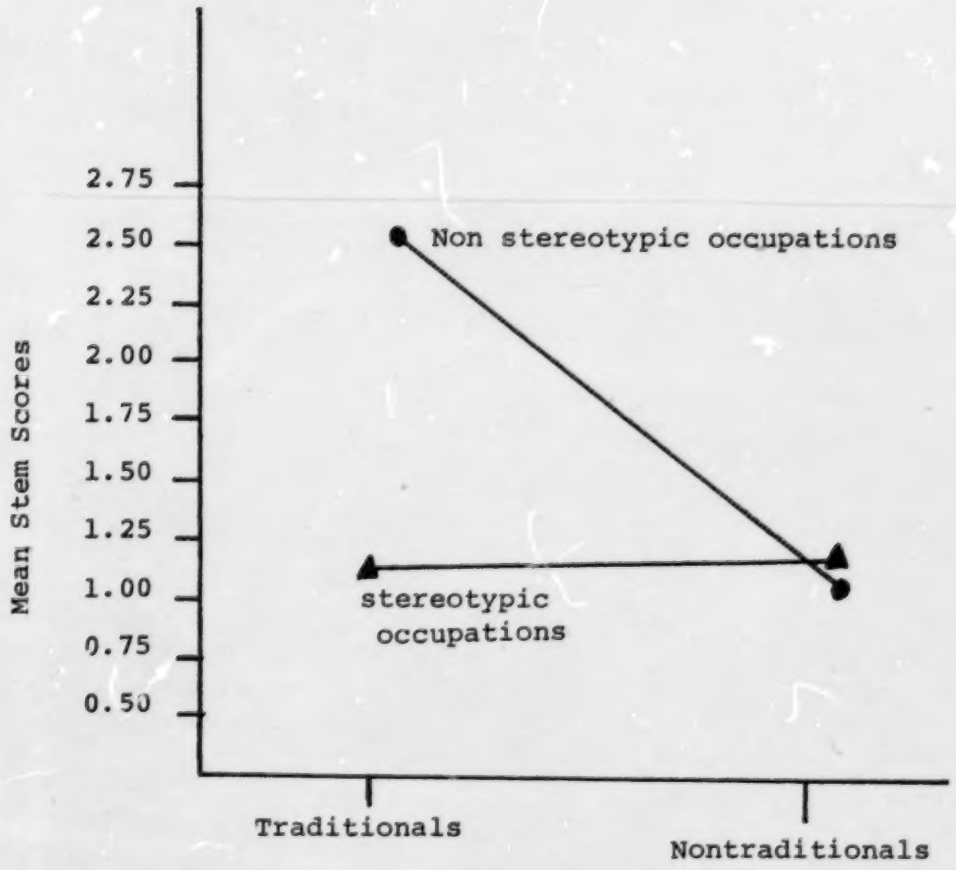

Figure 1. Profile of Subjects Mean Stem Scores as a Function of Groups and Occupations